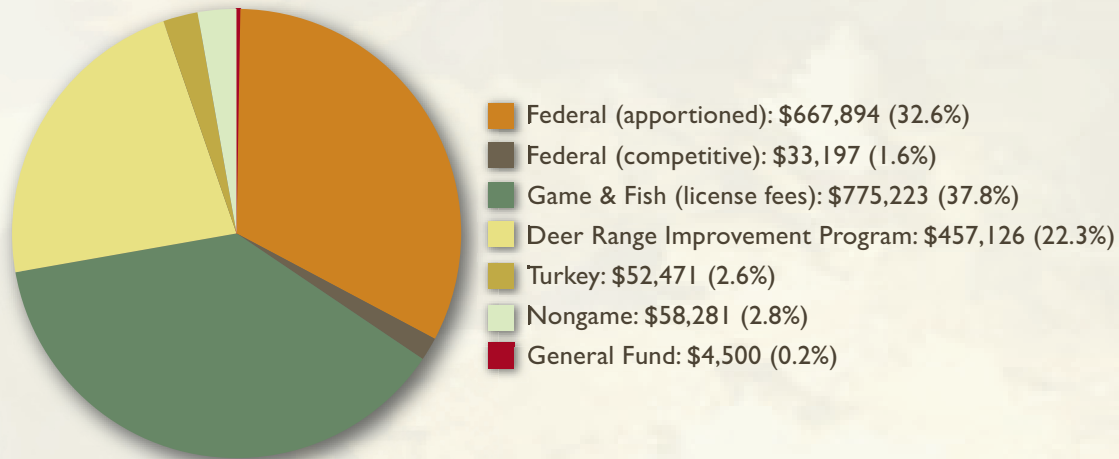


Planning



Fiscal Year 2010

Planning Expenditures by Fund Source



The Wildlife Division invested:

- 10,249 hours on northern forest planning, primarily related to planning management activities in state forest compartments;
- 8,821 hours on strategic planning to develop the GPS and provide long-range direction for division activities;
- 5,458 hours on regional statewide planning, mostly for ecoregional and regional state forest planning;
- 3,014 hours on state game area planning (the Wildlife Division planned to write 14 master plans; five were completed and are in the final approval process, while the rest are in progress);
- 2,768 hours on private land management planning and 502 hours working with landowners on management plans (the Wildlife Division planned to make 115 landowner contacts and develop 55 landowner plans, and accomplished making 103 landowner contacts and developing 41 landowner plans);
- 1,197 hours on annual work plans to ensure that workloads are aligned with budgets and established priorities;
- 1,070 hours on operational planning (the Wildlife Division planned to write 27 operational plans and accomplished writing 29 plans);
- 981 hours on integrating wildlife management objectives into other agency and organization planning initiatives;
- 656 hours on invasive species program planning;
- 347 hours planning projects for species of greatest conservation need;
- 235 hours reviewing and revising Michigan's current Wildlife Action Plan; and
- 47 hours on Michigan's statewide Ecosystem Plan.

Planning is a critical component of wildlife management. The most intensive FY 2010 Wildlife Division planning effort was the development of its new strategic plan, the GPS. Other major planning initiatives include planning as part of the forest certification process, regional state forest plans and species management plans.

Each year the Wildlife Division staff creates annual work plans, which organize the division's work for the following year. Recognizing an increased need for strategic planning and processes to ensure operational plans are developed and implemented to meet strategic goals and objectives, the division began developing a new Planning and Adaptation Section. Staff will be reassigned to this new section from other work areas. The section's key responsibilities will be to assist the division in setting direction, monitoring the projects implemented, learning from successes and failures, and adapting future work based on what has been learned.

Wildlife Division Strategic Plan: Guiding Principles and Strategies

In fiscal year 2010, the Wildlife Division developed a strategic plan, called The GPS: Guiding Principles and Strategies, to provide clear direction and specify priorities for the next five years. The process began in late 2009 with internal division meetings to identify key issues and emerging wildlife needs. The division identified its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats over a period of months and held focus group meetings, including both staff and stakeholders. Staff members collected input from Natural Resources Commission members, state legislators, other department directors and staff, and federal agencies. The plan was presented to the Natural Resources Commission and posted online for public comment. Then-DNR Director Rebecca Humphries approved the GPS on Nov. 4, 2010. It is available online at www.michigan.gov/wildlife.

Forest Planning

Regional State Forest Management Plans – Work continued on three regional state forest management plans, under the framework of the State Forest Management Plan approved in April of 2008. Wildlife Division staff participation in these regional plans was directed towards ensuring that wildlife restoration, along with associated hunting and trapping recreation, is adequately reflected in plans.

Forest Certification – The DNR's state forest system receives dual sustainable forestry certification from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forest Initiative. For the past five years, the department has maintained its certifications through annual surveillance audits. The DNR's Forest Management Division and the Wildlife Division co-manage the state forest system. The DNR maintains strategic management plans for the system as a requirement to maintain sustainable forestry certifications. Wildlife Division staff participates in this strategic planning to ensure that wildlife management objectives are included in maintaining sustainable forests.

Consequently, forest certification continued to be a significant focus of the Wildlife Division's involvement in state forest strategic planning in FY 2010. The division assisted in developing forest certification work instructions and in co-managing the forests according to those instructions. During FY 2010, the DNR conducted its fifth annual surveillance audit. Major focus was directed toward ORV management issues, compliance with applicable laws and regulations, land acquisition/management funding sources, implementing and tracking of within-stand retention (patches, edges, etc.), timber sale preparation and administration procedure, follow-up on internal audit nonconformance reports, biomass harvesting guidelines, and lands in and out of scope of certification.

State Forest Compartment Reviews – Operational planning for specific forest treatments (timber sales, wildlife habitat treatments, trails and recreation facilities) to achieve the goals and objectives of the state forest plan occurs through a DNR process known as compartment reviews. The state forest system is comprised of 15 forest management units, each of which is divided into a number of compartments, with each compartment containing 1,500 to 3,000 acres. Compartments are divided into numerous stands of interest and reviewed on a 10-year rotation, with each stand within the compartment inventoried and treatments considered during the review. With nearly four million acres within the state forest system, on average 10 percent – or roughly 400,000 acres – is reviewed annually. Compartments and stands are not uniform in size, so the number of acres reviewed in any given year fluctuates around the approximately 400,000-acre average.

State Game and Wildlife Area Planning

Strategic State Game and Wildlife Area Master Plans – The Wildlife Division is committed to developing or revising master plans for each state game area and wildlife area on a ten-year cycle. Master plans outline the management goals and objectives for these areas, made possible through federal assistance grants. The plan creation process takes more than two years – with inventory, writing, review and approval – and includes input by other DNR resource-management divisions as well as public consultation. In FY 2010 the Wildlife Division

had planned to complete 14 plans, completed three and is currently completing the rest.

Operational Plans – Operational plans outline those specific steps the division must take to achieve the strategic objectives in the project-area (generally state game area) master plans, including accomplishments to be fulfilled by specified dates and activities and techniques necessary to attain them. In FY 2010 the Wildlife Division completed more operational plans than anticipated.

Featured Species Approach

The Wildlife Division has adopted a featured species approach to direct its habitat management work. Featured species are high-priority target species, identified to focus habitat management efforts and align them with specific objectives for these species. This approach will help the division to be more explicit in outlining the goals of its habitat management program and the rationale for those goals and the actions taken to meet them. It will also focus monitoring and evaluation efforts, making them more efficient, and improve the division's ability to adapt its habitat management activities.

The featured species approach will promote planning that concentrates on the desired impacts to the species, expanding the Wildlife Division's management emphasis from outputs such as acres and hours to include more pertinent outcomes like population size and hunter satisfaction.

With stakeholder input, the Wildlife Division identified 42 featured species that represent a variety of habitat types and social values, including mammals, birds, butterflies and a snake. The list of featured species includes game species, threatened or endangered species, and species of greatest conservation need.

The Wildlife Division is developing habitat management guidance for each featured species, which will be incorporated into state game area master plans, regional state forest management plans, compartment reviews and private lands programs.

Featured Species:

American bittern

American marten

American woodcock

beaver

black bear

blackburnian warbler

black-throated blue warbler

bobcat

bobolink

Canada goose

eastern bluebird

eastern cottontail

eastern fox snake

eastern meadowlark

elk

golden-winged warbler

gray jay

Karner blue butterfly

Kirtland's warbler

mallard

massasauga rattlesnake

Mitchell's satyr butterfly

moose

northern goshawk

osprey

peregrine falcon

pileated woodpecker

pipit plover

red crossbill

red-backed salamander

red-headed woodpecker

red-shouldered hawk

ring-necked pheasant

ruffed grouse

scaup

sharp-tailed grouse

snowshoe hare

spruce grouse

upland sandpiper

wild turkey

white-tailed deer

wood duck

wood thrush

Living Legacies: Managing Michigan's Diverse Natural Places

The Wildlife Division plays a key role in the DNR's "Living Legacies" initiative, an effort to establish a statewide network of areas that best represent the diversity of Michigan's biological heritage, or biodiversity. These areas are known as Biodiversity Stewardship Areas (BSAs). Identifying proposed BSAs has been a long process, involving several years of planning and including input from many partners, the public and multiple DNR divisions. More information about the Living Legacies initiative is available at www.michigan.gov/livinglegacies.

Species Management Plans

Deer Management Plan – In May 2010, the Wildlife Division completed a statewide Deer Management Plan with a goal "to maintain a healthy white-tailed deer population using sound scientific management, maximizing recreational opportunities while minimizing negative impacts on ecosystems and other wildlife species and without creating undue hardship to private interests." The plan calls for an adaptive management framework, in which management changes are made, evaluated and adjusted regularly. Development of the management plan began in September 2008 with a day-long symposium on deer management, open to wildlife professionals and the public. The planning process included public scoping meetings, a Deer Advisory Team and a public opinion survey. A draft management plan was presented to the public in early 2010, with a series of public meetings across the state in February and March for review and comment. The Michigan Deer Management Plan, which will be reviewed and updated at five-year intervals, ultimately adopted six goals toward maintaining a healthy deer herd and public satisfaction. The plan calls for Regional Deer Advisory Teams, initiated in FY 2011, to guide decision-making.

Elk Management Plan – The Wildlife Division is developing a revision to its elk management plan, first completed in 1985. Much has changed in the last 25 years, including elk abundance and distribution, forest composition, land use practices, wildlife diseases and economic conditions. The plan's mission is "to maintain a healthy elk population that provides a balance of recreational opportunities for residents while at the same time minimizing negative impacts to habitat, other wildlife resources and valued economic benefits." An Elk Advisory Team, including members representing various stakeholder groups, was formed, met several times and presented its recommendation report to the DNR. A draft management plan, currently being written, will be available for public review in the summer of 2011, followed by public open houses and then a finalized plan by the fall of 2011.



Pictured from left to right: elk; members of the Deer Advisory Team; white-tailed deer